DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 424 353 CE 077 135

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TITLE State Investments in Work Participation: Meeting the Promise of Welfare-to-Work.
INSTITUTION Tufts Univ., Medford, MA. Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy.
PUB DATE 1998-08-00
NOTE 37p.
AVAILABLE FROM Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, Tufts School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Medford, MA 02155.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; Adult Literacy; *Basic Skills; *Demonstration Programs; *Employment Programs; Federal Legislation; *Job Training; Literacy Education; Postsecondary Education; Program Effectiveness; Skill Development; *Welfare Recipients; Workplace Literacy
IDENTIFIERS *Welfare to Work Programs

ABSTRACT

As states implement new strategies to help more families make the transition from welfare to work, they will be faced with the challenge of designing programs that address the needs of an extremely diverse population of families. Some families will be able to make the transition to work with limited assistance, especially in a strong economy. Others will benefit greatly from traditional welfare-to-work programs and skills training geared to labor market demands. But a substantial portion of the caseload faces significant personal or family challenges. These individuals are likely to need more assistance than offered in past programs and will benefit from more creative approaches to work experience opportunities. The success of welfare reform will depend on states' abilities to engage welfare recipients, especially the hard-to-employ, in the labor force without causing harm to large numbers of poor families in the process. A number of innovative strategies have been implemented to enable welfare recipients and other low-income people to get long-term, unsubsidized unemployment. Nine case studies were examined representing different welfare-to-work strategies. Together they depict different promising approaches to welfare-to-work focusing on the following: (1) community jobs and innovative employer involvement; (2) comprehensive programs for the hard-to-employ; (3) training in specialized fields with good employment prospects; and (4) support for postsecondary education. (This report includes profiles of nine programs; it contains 38 references and resources.) (KC)

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State Investments in Work Participation:

Meeting the Promise of Welfare-to-Work

August 1998

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State Investments in Work Participation:

Meeting the Promise of Welfare-to-Work

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank those who reviewed this paper for their insightful comments: Barbara Gault, Ph.D., Institute for Women's Policy Research; Cliff Johnson and Sharon Parrott, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; and Julie Strawn, Center for Law and Social Policy.

The author wishes to thank her colleagues at the Center on Hunger and Poverty, J. Larry Brown and John T. Cook, for their guidance and editing assistance. The author is also grateful to Meredith Levy for her assistance in researching and drafting descriptions of promising welfare-to work programs.

The author is solely responsible for the contents of this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

State Investments in Work Participation: Meeting the Promise of Welfare-to-Work takes the 1996 welfare law at its word. Implicit in the slogan "welfare-to-work" is the promise of work for poor families as an alternative to welfare. The concept that government should invest in moving families on welfare into the labor force is not new. For over three decades, the federal welfare program has included a work requirement for non-exempted families, yet the full intent (or promise) of the each subsequent piece of legislation was not fully fulfilled.

The original welfare-to-work initiative was the Work Incentive Program (WIN) of 1967. Operating the WIN employment and training programs cost welfare agencies more than just issuing monthly benefit checks. With limited federal funding and many states not making the necessary investments, WIN often became little more than a registration requirement. In 1988, Congress decided to replace WIN with the Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program. Although there was considerably more federal funding provided, states were also asked to increase their investments. Yet, even with about half of the caseload exempted, states lacked the resources to offer employment services to all who were eligible. In fiscal year 1994, the number of AFDC recipients actually participating in the JOBS program was only about 13% of the entire adult AFDC caseload (GAO, 1997).

By the 1990's, policy makers and voters had become dissatisfied with a welfare system that failed to get poor people into jobs. The result of this perceived failure was the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) which created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant that replaced AFDC and JOBS. State receipt of the full TANF block grant allocation is dependent on its ability to meet work participation rate requirements that escalate to 50% of the adult caseload by the year 2002. More importantly, most recipients will only be eligible for a maximum of 60 months (and even fewer months in many states) of TANF cash benefits in their lifetime.

Investing in Welfare-to-Work

To meet the promise (and requirement) of welfare-to-work, states will have to exceed their past efforts by investing in employment initiatives for individuals who can justifiably be categorized as "hard-to-employ". Many states have yet to make the necessary investments to do this. In a recently released study of state welfare policies, the Center on Hunger and Poverty evaluated state policies, in effect on October 1, 1997, that are likely to impact the long-term financial well-being of poor families. Most states received a low score in the two categories that measured whether, when designing their new welfare programs, states have taken into account the many factors that impact recipients' abilities to obtain and maintain employment at a level sufficient to support a family.

In a July, 1998 publication, the Center on Hunger and Poverty demonstrated how a state can take a portfolio management approach to investment in welfare reform. This can guide state managers by clarifying the risks involved in different family economic security investments, the nature of returns on those investments, and strategies for minimizing risks (and potential losses) and maximizing returns. The current report will aid state managers both in assessing those risks and projecting the returns of employment program options available to their state. It concludes with examples of programs which have benefited from the lessons of the past and represent good investments for the future.

Fulfilling the Expectation to Work

Who are the welfare recipients whom policymakers expect to find jobs? Research shows that many individuals on welfare face serious barriers to full-time, uninterrupted employment. Two-thirds scored in the bottom quartile on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT) measuring basic job skills; one half of those scored in the bottom 10%, representing extremely low basic job skills. Two-thirds of recipients also face other serious barriers to employment, such as medical problems, mental health problems, chemical dependency, and/or caring for a dependent with severe disabilities (Pavetti, 1997). Employment histories of moderately low-skilled women (scoring between the 25th and 10th percentiles on the AFQT) suggest it is reasonable to expect some will find steady employment relatively quickly, but others will need training and support and continued assistance during periods of joblessness. Employment prospects of one-third of the welfare caseload with extremely low skills are far less promising. Few will transition to steady employment on their own and most will need the right kind of programs to prepare for work.

Under the slogan "work first", many of today's welfare-to-work programs emphasize job search and not much more. Studies of past welfare-to-work programs have shown that an emphasis on job search may prove successful in locating work for those who are most employable, but for the majority of welfare recipients this is not enough. The most effective welfare-to-work programs share a balanced approach that mixes education, job training, job search, and paid and unpaid work experience. Successful employment programs have a consistent focus on employment with comprehensive individualized services. Programs for the very low skilled are more effective if they include a comprehensive choice of employment-focused activities, with acquiring a GED as a component but not as an end goal.

Expanding Capacity and Work Opportunity

Under the previous laws, many of the "hard-to-employ" were exempt from work requirements. Little effort was made to increase their employability, but PRWORA forces states to serve those with both recognizable and assumed barriers to employment. For almost every state, the allocation received from the TANF block grant in the first two years is sufficient to expand existing programming in key areas, including programs which will assist recipients in obtaining work. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 provided an additional $3 billion to states over two years for grants to pay for a variety of employment related activities aimed largely at individuals with significant barriers to work. Thus

funds are now available to expand programming previously offered only on a limited basis, if at all, in most parts of the country.

Some experts question if, even in this currently strong economy, there are enough entry-level jobs available for welfare recipients who are expected to find sufficient work to support themselves and their families. Nationally, the economy was projected to create only about half as many net new low-skill jobs as there are recipients targeted to enter the labor force in the first year of federal welfare reform. In large urban settings and isolated rural communities there are even lower ratios of entry-level jobs to potential new applicants. Wage-paying community jobs programs are one solution to the lack to appropriate private sector jobs. The federal Welfare-to-Work grants included in the Balanced Budget Act provide funds to states to create such jobs for the hard-to-employ. Community jobs can reach recipients with little or no prior work experience and provide a chance to develop work habits and skills to increase employability in non-subsidized jobs.

In addition to offering multi-faceted programs emphasizing job search, while supplementing lack of basic education and offering work experience such as community jobs, states must also make up-front investments in staffing and the assessment process. Well trained intake workers and case managers with manageable caseloads will need to be able to assess employability and identify resources to address barriers.

While balanced, comprehensive programs will help the hard-to-employ, moderate and higher skilled recipients can benefit from additional advanced training. Although the new federal welfare law limits vocational education training as a work activity for purposes of determining the participation rate, some states have adopted policies that exceed the federal limits by offering programs outside of the participation rate calculation, under retained waivers, or through state funds. An additional year of education has been shown to add about 10% a year to average earnings - resulting in financial gain for both the individual and the state (Osterman, 1996). At least two states are providing cash assistance benefits while the recipient attends a two or four year post secondary educational institution. In some regions, specialized training programs in fields with a shortage of skilled workers is making possible jobs offering good wages and steady employment.

Summary

As states begin to implement new strategies to help more families transition from welfare-to-work, they will be faced with the challenge of designing programs that can address the needs of a diverse group of families. In the end, the overall success of welfare reform will rest on a state's ability to engage nearly all recipient families in the labor force without causing harm to large numbers of poor families in the process. States will have fulfilled the promise of welfare-to-work when all recipients are self-sufficient to the highest degree possible through work, rather than needing to rely on welfare.

The last section of the report highlights some of the early investments states have made in assisting welfare recipients to obtain work.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing Emphasis on Work

Several decades ago public opinion and evolving social norms began to condone mothers working outside the home to help support their families. This sentiment has been reflected in federal welfare policy as it has evolved over the past 30 years and represents a shift since the creation of the Aid to Dependent Children program in 1935. When ADC was established in the Depression, one of the principal goals was to enable widows and other single mothers to care for their children without being forced to hold a job. In the 1930s, mothers were expected to act as caregivers and homemakers, not as breadwinners, even when they were unsupported by a working spouse (Burtless, 1995).

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a major shift in social attitudes toward work among mothers. Because job holding was increasingly common among married mothers, including mothers with very young children, the public began to challenge the concept that single mothers should receive public assistance rather than work. Moreover, the nature of AFDC (now a program for dependent children and their families) recipients changed. By 1971 more than three-quarters of families receiving AFDC were headed by women who were separated, divorced, deserted by their husbands, or had never been married (Burtless, 1995). These mothers evoked less sympathy than widows and were not seen as meriting different treatment than other mothers who were working outside the home.

The requirement that mothers work, or prepare to begin working, has been part of the AFDC program since the creation of the Work Incentive Program (WIN) in 1967. Over time, the proportion of mothers subject to work requirements has gradually increased, as has the rigor with which the requirements are enforced. Only mothers with children over age five were required to register for the WIN program. However, when this program was replaced with the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program in the Family Support Act of 1988, mothers with children over age three were required to participate, and states had the option of including families with children over the age of one.

Although there was growing support for the concept that single mothers receiving welfare should prepare to enter the labor force, not all states were willing to make the necessary investments. Operating the WIN employment and training programs cost welfare agencies more than just issuing monthly benefit checks, so WIN became little more than a registration requirement in some states (Blank & Blum, 1997).

By 1988, Congress was ready to re-evaluate welfare-to-work programs based on the experience of states which had made past investments in these programs. The more comprehensive JOBS programs were to provide education and training services and at least two of four additional activities - job search, on-the-job training, work supplementation, and/or community work experience. Although there was considerably more federal funding provided, states were also asked to increase their investments. If services (including child care) could be made available to them, all AFDC recipients, who were not specifically exempted, were obligated to participate in welfare-to-work activities, or

face financial sanctions. Yet, even with about half of the caseload exempted, states lacked the resources to offer service to all who were eligible. In fiscal year 1994, the number of AFDC recipients actually participating in the JOBS program was only about 13% of the entire adult AFDC caseload (GAO, 1997).

This inability to engage recipients in work, or work-related programs, continued to fuel dissatisfaction with the welfare system. A national survey conducted in late 1993 found that voters believed welfare failed at what should be its primary goal: getting poor people back on their feet and into jobs. When asked to name the top goal for reforming welfare, the most frequent response (selected by 52% of those surveyed) was helping people get off the welfare rolls and into the work force. Only 7% chose saving taxpayers money as the top goal of reform. Five to one, Americans favored reforms that would help people leave welfare even if this actually cost more money in the short run than the AFDC system (Garin et al, 1994).

Work Requirements under TANF

By the mid-1990s, many states had taken the initiative to change their welfare programs in response to the desire to move poor families from welfare into work. State policies were changed by waivers from AFDC and JOBS requirements granted by the federal Department of Health and Human Services. This effort was codified on the national level with passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. PRWORA created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, replacing AFDC and JOBS. The new law provides states with considerable flexibility to determine how they will use their TANF funds, but it is quite prescriptive in the area of work participation.

Parents or caretakers receiving assistance under TANF are required to engage in work activity, unless the state has opted to exempt parents with children under age one, or there is no available child care for a child under age six, or the state has created other exempt categories. If an individual does not engage in work as required, the family's TANF grant is reduced. States have the option to completely terminate assistance for families who do not comply with the work requirement. States also face a financial penalty if they do not meet work participation rate requirements. In fiscal year 1997, states were required to have 25% of their entire caseload participating in work or work-related activities with the rate increasing 5% each year until reaching 50% by fiscal year 2002. (A state's work participation rate requirement can be proportionately reduced by credits granted for a reduction in its TANF caseload.) Heads of two parent households are required to work at least 35 hours per week, and by fiscal year 2000, single heads of households will be required to work at least 30 hours per week to be counted in the work participation rate.

What counts as participation in work is substantially different under TANF than under the JOBS program. The focus is primarily on employment rather than employment preparation activities such as assessment and education and training. States are not prohibited from placing recipients in these activities under TANF, but only recipients participating in those activities specified in the law can

count toward a state's work participation rate. Only up to 30% of the caseload can participate in vocational education, and participation is limited to 12 months as a countable work activity.

INVESTING IN WELFARE-TO-WORK

A state can opt to use its own funds to provide cash assistance and other benefits for families where the adult is participating in "work activity" that does not qualify for the work participation rate requirement. For example, in a separate state program, a state can provide assistance to recipients who would benefit from increased hours of vocational education. Or, if a state chooses to include substance abuse or mental health counseling or treatment services as "work activity", it can use state funds to provide cash assistance to the recipient for the duration of these services. In a program in which state funds are segregated from TANF funds, a state can provide continued assistance to families with demonstrated part-time work short of full self-sufficiency, even after families have reached the 60 month federal lifetime limit for benefits. If specified criteria are met, this use of state funds will count toward state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement for the TANF block grant.

Thus, the new federal welfare law gives states more flexibility in assisting poor families to obtain work while imposing restrictions and requirements. The latter has caused many states to be overly cautious when exercising their options. As a result, many states have not invested in policies that are more likely to increase family economic security. This was reflected in the low scores for the categories of "Work Requirements and Related Sanctions" and "Assistance in Obtaining Work" in a February, 1998 analysis of all states (CH&P, 1998). While some states have taken into account factors, such as serious disabilities or a child with a chronic medical condition, that can serve as barriers to participation in work activity, others have not. A few states have increased opportunities for post-secondary education while most have adopted the federal restrictions, or even placed greater limitations on any vocational education being credited as work activity.

Ultimately, "welfare-to-work" will work only if states make strategic investments in the employability of the "hard-to-employ". This will require a fundamental change in approach. Government administrators are frequently urged to manage programs and funds in a more business-like manner. Typically, this means in a manner likely to produce a good return on program investments. Like other wise investors, state managers and policymakers can maximize the overall returns on their state's investments in family economic security by carefully applying proven investment portfolio principles. In a recent publication, the Center on Hunger and Poverty describes how a state might take a portfolio management approach to welfare reform. The greatest strength of the portfolio management approach is that it provides a productive way to examine alternatives and make choices in situations involving combinations of several investment activities with varying degrees of risk and rates of return. A portfolio management approach can guide state managers by clarifying the kind of risks involved in different family economic security investments, the nature of returns on those investments, and strategies for minimizing risks (and potential losses) and maximizing returns (Cook & Venner, 1998).

The studies cited in this analyses can aid state managers both in assessing the risks and projecting the returns of program options available to their state. The research sheds light on which poor families need assistance in obtaining work and the effectiveness of programs designed to aid them.

FULFILLING THE EXPECTATION TO WORK

Characteristics of Low Income Mothers Seeking Public Assistance

The poor labor market prospects of many welfare recipients, especially those most dependent on cash assistance, are apparent when one considers their child-rearing responsibilities, low educational attainment and basic skills, health limitations, and lack of work experience. Under JOBS, individuals were exempted from the work requirement if they were ill or incapacitated, needed in the home because of an ill or incapacitated family member, or caring for a young child (from under age three to under age one, depending on the state). After accounting for such exemptions, less than 45% of adult AFDC recipients were required to participate in JOBS (U.S. House, 1996).

Analysis of data reveals that, in 1991, almost 90% of single mothers who were AFDC recipients between the age of 27 and 35 experienced at least one of five potential barriers to employment (low basic skills, substance abuse, health limitations, depression, or a child with chronic medical condition or serious disability). About half of all recipients experience a serious form of one or more of these barriers (Olson & Pavetti, 1996). Studies also have found that at least 50% of participants who were receiving AFDC had experienced domestic violence. Other research indicates that domestic violence has a marked effect on security, tardiness, absenteeism and workplace productivity issues (Kramer, 1998).

Poor mastery of basic skills is the characteristic that most distinguishes welfare recipients from other mothers. Researchers found that welfare recipients' scores on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT), a measure of basic skills with a strong positive association with future earnings and employment, are three times as likely as non-recipients' scores to fall in the bottom quartile of the AFQT distribution. Almost two-thirds of women who received welfare scored in the bottom quartile with almost half of these women scoring in the bottom decile (indicating extremely low basic skills) (Pavetti, 1997).

Yet, some individuals with low basic skills can reasonably expect to find some employment. Almost three-quarters of all moderately low-skilled women (scoring between the 25th and 10th percentiles on the AFQT) find steady, although very low paying employment by their late twenties. In contrast, only about 40% of all extremely low-skilled women find steady employment by their late twenties (Pavetti, 1997).

This suggests that it is reasonable to expect many welfare recipients with moderately low skills (about one-third of the caseload under AFDC) to find steady employment, and for a substantial fraction to

do so relatively quickly. Some, however, will require a more gradual transition to steady employment with continued support needed during periods of joblessness, and skills training needed to improve employment options. Because they are likely to hold relatively low paying and/or part-time jobs indefinitely, work supports such as child care and transportation assistance may be needed for extended periods (Pavetti, 1997).

The employment prospects of the third of the welfare caseload with extremely low skills look far less promising. Few will transition to steady employment on their own, and those who do will take a longer time to do so (Pavetti, 1997). Thus, state policy makers will need to explore new ways for welfare-to-work programs to assist greater numbers of poor families become more self-sufficient, if they are to comply with the federal work participation requirements.

Results of Past Welfare-to-Work Programs

Most previous welfare-to-work programs served no more than 5% to 15% of all AFDC adult recipients in the sites where they operated. For those whom they served, the results were mixed. The general findings from research on past programs show little benefit from participation for those who are most employable, as they were likely to move relatively quickly into work (or return to work) with or without the program. Recipients with moderately low basic skills and other non-prohibitive barriers to employment benefited from the typical welfare-to-work program, with modest increases in employment and earnings. But few programs demonstrated promising results for mothers with extremely low basic skills and/or serious barriers to employment (Gueron & Pauly, 1991).

A variety of work and training programs for welfare recipients have been attempted over the past 30 years. Analysts have accumulated considerable evidence about programs that have modestly succeeded in improving recipient's earning and the reasons for their success. Much of this evidence indicates that education and training are worthwhile but cannot eliminate the job market problems faced by long-term welfare recipients (Burtless, 1995). The most effective welfare-to-work programs share a balanced approach that mixes education, job training, job search, and paid and unpaid work experience. Successful employment programs have a consistent focus on employment with comprehensive individualized services. Programs for the very low skilled are more effective if they include a comprehensive choice of employment-focused activities with acquiring a GED as one component, but not as an end goal in itself (Strawn, 1997).

Past welfare-to-work programs generally have not resulted in increased wages. The GAIN program in Riverside County, California is frequently cited for its success in increasing employment, but participants in the program earned roughly the same per hour as those in the control group who were employed. Yet, it is possible for welfare-to-work programs to help participants earn higher wages if this goal is made a priority. The Riverside GAIN program stressed job search and immediate employment. In contrast, participants in the Baltimore Options program got better-paying jobs than the control group and lasting improvements in earnings. This program carefully assessed participants' capabilities and matched them to the most appropriate activities and in the sequence they

wished - job search, unpaid work experience, education or training - rather than everyone beginning with mandatory job search as in the Riverside GAINS program.

A study of welfare-to-work participants in Portland, Oregon in the mid-1990s, also reports increased employment and increased wages for program participants. The Portland program used a mixed services strategy: most people participated in job search, but many also participated in short-term education, vocational training, work experience, and life skills training. In the program, "good" jobs, rather than "any" job, were considered the preferable path to self-sufficiency. Staff urged participants to seek and accept full-time jobs paying more than the minimum wage, with benefits and potential for advancement. (Scrivener et al, 1998).

Beginning with welfare program reform through the waiver process, and now under the PRWORA, numerous states have altered their JOBS programs to emphasize quick job entry rather than participation in longer-term education and training programs. These programs, given the tag of "work first", are based on the belief that the best way for welfare recipients to become self-sufficient is for them to enter the labor market as quickly as possible. "Any" job is viewed as a "good" job, providing a starting point and an opportunity for recipients to develop work habits and skills that, over time, will lead to a better job. Job search assistance is central and sometimes the only service offered to participants.

The success of Riverside's GAIN program, and also San Diego's SWIM program, in getting more recipients employed (although not at higher wages) is often cited as a rationale for pursuing a quick job entry strategy over a human capital investment strategy. The evaluation results from SWIM and Riverside GAIN suggest that, even though there was a significant decrease in receipt of welfare benefits and an increase in earned income for program participants who were expected to have the most difficulty making the transition from welfare to work, large numbers of recipients exposed to these programs did not succeed in finding employment and continued on welfare benefits for extended periods of time (Mead, 1996).

Many recipients who experienced personal and family challenges beyond low skills never participated in Riverside's GAIN program at all; within eleven months after orientation about 35% of the applicants were deferred from the GAIN program. Over a three year period, only two-thirds of the registrants were ever employed. Only 23% of Riverside GAIN registrants were employed and not receiving AFDC at the end of the three-year period (Weissman, 1997). The Portland program demonstrated greater success with 40% of the program participants working at full-time jobs at the end of two years. Yet almost 20% of the program group members were deferred at time of entry even though the program was to include the most disadvantaged (Scrivener et al, 1998). Similar results will not be satisfactory when states face escalating federal work participation rate requirements, and families are subject to time limits for receipt of benefits, regardless of their employment and income status.

Principles for Creating More Effective Welfare-to-Work Strategies

- Balanced Approach: The most effective welfare-to-work programs share a flexible, balanced approach that offers job search, education, job training, and work. Successful employment programs more generally offer a wide range of individualized services; have a central focus on employment; have close ties to local employers; and are intensive, setting high expectations for participation.

- Focus on Education and Training: Job training in the classroom or workplace and access to post-secondary education are key components of a strategy aimed at better jobs. Training must be made more consistently effective, however, and more accessible to those with low basic skills.

- Include Basic Education: Activities to improve basic education skills are also important but should be provided as part of a broader range of employment training activities.

- Work as an Integral Component: Work can be a critical part of increasing recipients' employability if it is part of a broad range of employment and training services. It may be especially effective for the most disadvantaged recipients.

- Skills Acquisition for the Short and Long Term: In many states welfare time limits and/or a quick employment focus mean that policymakers should consider new ways to build skills quickly and to help low income workers, including former welfare recipients, improve their skills and move up to better jobs over time.

*Adapted from **Beyond Job Search or Basic Education: Rethinking the Role of Skills in Welfare Reform**, by Julie Strawn, Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC, April 1998.*

Job Availability and Opportunities for Full Employment

Most adult AFDC recipients have at least some work experience. Past studies report that, while nearly all AFDC recipients have worked at some point in the past, from one fourth to one half, or more, (depending on location) had never worked full time for a single employer for six months or more (Bloom, 1997). Although the previously discussed barriers do not entirely prevent recipients

from obtaining work, welfare mothers are not likely to find stable, family-needs sensitive, living wage paying, full-time jobs. Studies have found that 40% of women who leave welfare for work return to the welfare rolls within three years (or as little as 12 months in one study) due to insufficient or lost income (Bloom, 1997).

TANF recipients, like their AFDC predecessors, are likely to obtain jobs that are unstable, with few or no fringe benefits, such as health insurance or paid sick days. As low-income single mothers, they will often encounter "situational problems" related to child care, transportation, crime, domestic violence and other issues that cause them to lose or quit their jobs. For longer-term recipients, past studies have suggested that they may have difficulties adjusting to the work world and appropriately responding to supervisors, causing them to quit or be fired (Bloom, 1997). Recipients who have spent the least amount of time in the labor force were overwhelmingly women who are likely to have the least favorable economic prospects or women for whom work may simply not pay. Almost two-thirds of recipients with minimal involvement in the labor market have not completed high school and 59% have AFQT scores that fell in the bottom decile of the distribution (Pavetti, 1997).

Many experts question whether, even in the current strong economy, there are enough entry level jobs available for the welfare recipients who are expected to find sufficient work to support themselves and their families. Nationally, the economy was projected to create only about half as many net new low-skill jobs as there were welfare recipients targeted to enter the labor market in the first year of federal welfare reform (Weisbort, 1997). In large urban settings and isolated rural communities there are even lower ratios of entry-level jobs to potential applicants. Ninety-two percent of the cities responding to a survey conducted by the U. S. Conference of Mayors reported that they will not have a sufficient number of low-skill jobs to allow compliance with the welfare law's work participation requirements. (1997) In New York City it is estimated that it will take 21 years for all 470,000 adult welfare recipients to be absorbed into the economy, even at the current relatively low unemployment rate in that city (Finder, 1996).

Of welfare job seekers in the past, 41% got jobs in the service sector, 21% found work as laborers or operators, 16% in clerical, and 11% in retail sales; only 6% obtained better paying managerial and professional jobs (Burtless, 1997). It can be anticipated that the latter figure will decline substantially, as those with extremely low skills and little work experience are now expected to enter the labor market. Moreover, those who will be working will be earning less. Overall wage inequality in the United States has increased steadily since the late-1970s. From the late 1970s to the mid-1990s, the average incomes of the lowest-income families with children fell more than 20% nationwide, after adjustments for inflation (Larin & McNichol, 1997). For many, employment will not result in movement out of poverty for themselves and their children. In 1996, 63% of poor young children had at least one parent employed part or full time, an increase from 55% in 1993 (NCCP, 1998).

EXPANDING CAPACITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES

New Federal Welfare-to-Work Grants

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA) provides $3 billion over two years for formula and competitive grants to pay for a variety of employment related activities aimed largely at individuals with significant work barriers. At least 70% of these funds are to be used for TANF-related individuals who are long term recipients or those who will face time limits for TANF assistance within twelve months and for whom at least two of the following apply: has not completed secondary school or obtained a GED and has low skills; requires substance abuse treatment; or has a poor work history.

For the purpose of programs funded through the grant, "allowable activities" are those that move and keep individuals in lasting unsubsidized employment by any of the following means:

- creation and administration of community service or work experience programs;
- job creation through public or private sector employment wage subsidies;
- on-the-job training;
- contracts with public or private providers of readiness, placement, and post-employment services;
- job vouchers for placement, readiness, and post-employment services; and
- job retention or support services (e.g. transportation) if such services are not otherwise available.

Although considered TANF funds, the welfare-to-work grants are administered by the federal Department of Labor. To access formula grant funds, a state must provide $1 in matching funds above its TANF maintenance of effort level for every $2 it receives. Within states, at least 85% of the formula funds must be distributed to Private Industry Councils (PICs) to administer. With a focus on local control and decision-making, this new program is intended to enable communities to make investments that respond specifically to unique local needs, supplementing welfare-to-work activities already implemented at the state level under TANF. Future measures of state investments in welfare reform should evaluate whether states have accessed their maximum grant allotment and how they will use the funds to better meet the needs of the "hard-to-employ".

Creation of Community Jobs

Both TANF and welfare-to-work funds can be used by states and local communities to create wage-paying "community jobs" for TANF recipients through private nonprofit or public agencies. For hard-to-employ recipients, community jobs can give recipients with little or no prior work experience a chance to develop work habits and skills to increase employability in non-subsidized jobs. In depressed communities and remote areas with high rates of joblessness, community jobs can substitute for an inadequate supply of jobs, particularly entry-level jobs. During future periods of economic downturns, community jobs may provide ways to respond to rising unemployment and a

shrinking pool of private sector jobs. Community jobs can aid states in reaching their TANF work participation rate and increase the economic security of participants. Community jobs programs are intended to be designed to respond to community needs, such as providing home health aide services for the elderly, or building a playground and organizing programs for young children.

A basic approach to creating community jobs for welfare recipients uses funds now provided as cash assistance to cover some or all of the costs of participants' wages. Wage-based community jobs that provide earnings at least equal to prior cash benefits will increase participants' total income because they will qualify for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (and state EITC where it exists.) A job paying wages may seem - and be - more like work than a slot in a "workfare" program.

Community job creation initiatives can be designed to fit different labor market conditions and budgetary constraints. Statewide efforts serving all hard-to-employ individuals with added support services and higher than minimum wages would require large investments of resources. Vermont has such a program in place through its prior waiver. Vermont's Community Service Employment program operates on a statewide basis for all non-exempt welfare recipients who have received cash assistance for at least 30 months and are unable to secure unsubsidized employment. Alternatively, Washington is in the process of implementing a different approach, offering competitive grants for the Community Jobs Initiative in five regions of the state, including both urban and rural communities. More detailed descriptions of community jobs programs are provided in the last section.

Work Participation for the Hard-to-Employ

Community jobs initiatives can provide many of the hard-to-employ with an opportunity for work experience, however, studies of past programs have demonstrated that a more comprehensive approach is also needed. The roughly one third of the welfare caseload with extremely low skills and little work experience will only qualify for non-subsidized jobs that offer low pay, irregular hours, and few benefits without programs to enhance their employability, if they find employment at all. These people not only need to overcome a lack of skills and work experience, but psychological barriers as well. For some recipients, low skills or the presence of learning disabilities are synonymous with a life of failure. The end result is very low self-esteem and an overwhelming fear of change. It is extremely difficult for recipients who feel certain they will fail at any attempts to succeed on their own to take the first step toward self-sufficiency (Olson & Pavetti, 1996). Other recipients face additional barriers such as substance abuse, health limitations, depression, and/or a child or other dependent with chronic medical conditions or serious disability which may also make them hard to employ.

Under previous law, many of the hard-to-employ were exempt from work requirements, but the new welfare law forces states to serve both those with recognizable and assumed barriers to employment. It is hard to imagine a scenario where states can meet the work participation rates required under TANF without increasing employment among the most disadvantaged recipients. A previous section of this report highlights the components of a model welfare-to-work program for the hard-to-employ (see page 7). In addition to offering a multi-faceted program emphasizing job search, while

supplementing lack of basic education and offering work experience such as community jobs, a state must also make up-front investments in staffing and the assessment process. Well trained intake workers and case managers with manageable caseloads, either as public employees or as a part of private contracted services, will need to be able to assess employability and identify resources to address barriers.

Some states are training intake staff in new screening techniques, including sensitivity to evidence of domestic violence and substance abuse, when and how to use formal diagnostic tools to identify learning disabilities, and when and how to do home visits. Ongoing case managers may be expected to perform a broad array of new functions, including building trust and confidence, resolving conflict, and identifying and procuring services such as mental health services, substance abuse treatment, or transportation. Many states now have case managers meet with the recipient family to jointly develop a self-sufficiency plan that identifies the appropriate combination of education and work experience based on job readiness assessments. The plan outlines the steps and assigns responsibility for overcoming other barriers to work. Case managers may be required to do home visits to all long term recipients needing more in-depth assessment, and to noncomplying recipients to determine the cause. More detailed descriptions of programs for the hard-to-employ are provided in the next section.

Even the most effective welfare-to-work programs, combining good assessment and case management with job search, education, job training, and paid and unpaid work experience, cannot ensure steady, full-time employment for all the hard-to-employ. Post-placement case management can help resolve issues that might otherwise result in job loss, but by their nature, some jobs are seasonal or less than full-time, particularly those available to the hard-to-employ. Illinois has addressed this by acknowledging that not all welfare recipients will be able to obtain employment at a level sufficient to sustain their families. Illinois does not count months in which there are at least 80 hours of non-subsidized employment toward the lifetime limit of eligibility for cash assistance, thus having no fixed time limit for benefits for those who maintain at least partial employment.

Improving Earning Capacity

Moderate and higher skilled recipients can often benefit from additional advanced training, but the new federal welfare law allows no more than 12 months of vocational education training to count as work activity for individual recipients, and for only 30% of the TANF caseload to have these hours count toward work activity. In some states there are specialized skill training programs that fit within the federal limitations on vocational education and prepare participants for para-professional jobs in such areas as home health aides or data entry. In some instances, such as a program in Seattle preparing skilled workers for the aerospace industry, training is geared to special local industry needs. More detailed descriptions of training programs in specialized fields are provided in the last section.

Some states are willing to exceed the federal limitations on vocational education training. According to responses received to the Tufts study, nineteen states have adopted policies which exceed the allowed duration of vocational education training and percentage of participants. Some of these

policies may be the result of prior waivers or in states which need not be concerned about meeting their work participation rate, but others are new separate state programs utilizing only state welfare dollars. For example, Maine has implemented a program to provide post-secondary education leading to two or four year degrees for up to 2,000 participants, while providing cash assistance and other benefits through a separate state program. (See the last section for more details.)

Maine's program demonstrates trends opposite to those that have been observed in several areas across the country. For example, Massachusetts has had a 51% decrease in welfare recipients enrollment in community college degree programs over the past three years (Chacon, 1998). Large post-secondary education enrollment declines among welfare recipients in Massachusetts, and in other locales like New York City, Baltimore and Milwaukee, may be due to the difficulty of balancing demands of academic programs with child rearing, while also meeting other work activity requirements (Cohen, 1998). Studies have shown that, despite all the talk of combining school and work, few participants can juggle the competing demands. Education loses out when mandatory hours must be spent in other approved work activities. Accepting this reality, the Maine Parents as Scholars program does not require other work activity for the first 24 months of college attendance.

Disinvestment in education and training represents a loss of income to both recipient families and the state. Each additional year of schooling adds about 10 % a year to average earnings (Osterman, 1996). Studies using census data demonstrate the increased earning capacities resulting from additional years of education - a bachelor's degree holder in 1989 earned an average of $2,552 per month while high school graduates only earned an average of $1,595 per month. This loss of individual income also means a loss of tax revenues for the state.

Imposing Sanctions for Non-Compliance with Work Requirements

In contrast to, or in combination with programs that assist recipients in obtaining work, the majority of states also impose greater sanctions for non-compliance with work requirements. Since 1968, states have had the authority to reduce a family's welfare payment if the adult who was required to participate in a work program did not comply. Repeated incidents of non-compliance usually resulted in escalating durations of reduced cash assistance. With the passage of PRWORA, sanctioning options and their magnitude increased. States now have the option to permanently terminate cash assistance for the entire family for non-compliance. States also can reduce or temporarily terminate food stamp benefits for the full family for the adult's non-compliance with TANF work requirements. Also, Medicaid can be temporarily or permanently terminated for an adult who fails to meet work requirements.

Policies that impose sanctions can serve many purposes and are viewed differently across states. Sanctions can be used to convey the message that the state is serious about the requirement to participate in work activity. In some instances, case managers believe sanctions have been an effective tool for motivating recipients who might not otherwise participate in the work activity. Termination of benefits can also be a way of eliminating recipients from the caseload who have an

alternative means of support and can opt to rely on it, rather than meet the work requirement through the welfare program. Yet a review of the latest research on the new, more severe sanctions calls into question whether they are an effective tool in achieving desired behavior change. Meanwhile, case reviews have shown that sanctions are being applied in ways never intended by the policymakers.

Stricter sanctions have been a factor in declining welfare caseloads nationwide. In some states, sanctions for infractions ranging from missing appointments with case managers to failing to search for work have caused a significant portion of caseload reductions. More than half of the cases closed in Indiana during a three-month period in 1997 were the result of sanctions; in Florida, over one-quarter of the cases closed in the second half of 1997 were because of sanctions. In the first year of Tennessee's new program, 40% of the families leaving welfare lost benefits because they did not comply with regulations, compared with 29% who left for reported employment according to state data (Vobjda & Havemann, 1998). A study of South Carolina case terminations for the first three months of 1997 found that 43% of the cases were closed due to increased earned income, 27% were subject to sanctions, and 11.4% failed to meet procedural requirements (SCDSS, 1998).

State officials and welfare experts say that they believe those who do get cut from the rolls represent two distinct groups within the welfare population. In one group are people who ignore program requirements because they are able to find jobs on their own, or have other income, or do not comply because they want to continue non-qualifying activities, like attending college. The Tennessee study of recipients who had lost aid because of sanctions found 89% had some source of income. An Iowa study found that about half of those who lost their benefits were working at least part-time after they had left the rolls (Fraher et al, 1997). This concurs with past research reporting that many welfare recipients have some other sources of income, although frequently inadequate to become self-sufficient or survive the consequences of sanctions without great difficulty. In a study of sanctioned cases in Michigan, 27% of the households reported a problem providing sufficient food for the family; 18% had received utility shutoff notices (Colville et al, 1997).

While some sanctions result from recipients with other income sources intentionally ignoring program requirements, there is clear evidence that sanctions also can cause severe harm to blameless families. In this group are those families unable to meet requirements because they are the most troubled families - plagued by mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, or such low-skill levels that they have difficulty understanding the new regulations, much less finding work. A Minnesota study of sanctioned families, based on a random sample of all non-complying cases, found they were twice as likely as other welfare recipients to report mental health problems, and four times as likely to report chemical dependency. Sanctioned families experienced medical health problems with three times the frequency of other welfare recipients (MDHS, 1996). A review of sanctions imposed in Utah found that half were in error, often when a case manager did not detect that a recipient suffered from mental illness or other problems. An independent case review process in Tennessee resulted in 30% of the cases scheduled for closure remaining open.

The final question is whether sanctions, or the threat of sanctions, motivates those who have not responded to other means of encouraging work participation. Despite anecdotal reports by case

managers, a recent analysis of different approaches to new welfare-to-work programs found that this is not the case. Regardless if it was a "work first" program or an emphasis on education and training, sanction rates in existing programs in the study are much higher than in previously studied programs. However, higher sanction rates were not associated with higher rates of eventual participation in program activities, compared to past programs (Hamilton et al, 1997). When considering sanctions terminating TANF benefits for the full family, Missouri officials checked with five other states imposing such sanctions. They found none had evidence that sanction policies were compelling increased participation in program activities (Ferber & Storch, 1998).

SUMMARY

As states implement new strategies to help more families make the transition from welfare to work, they will be faced with the challenge of designing programs that address the needs of an extremely diverse population of families. Some families will be able to make the transition to work with limited assistance, especially in a strong economy. Others will benefit greatly from traditional welfare-to-work programs and skills training geared to labor market demands. But a substantial portion of the caseload faces significant personal or family challenges. These individuals are likely to need more assistance than offered in past programs and will benefit from more creative approaches to work experience opportunities. In the end, the overall success of welfare reform will rest on states' abilities to engage recipient families, especially the hard-to-employ, in the labor force without causing harm to large numbers of poor families in the process. If successful, states will have met the promise of work for poor families as an alternative to welfare.

PROMISING WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS

To meet the promise of work, a number of innovative strategies have been implemented to enable welfare recipients and other low-income people to get long-term, unsubsidized employment. Programs vary considerably in their approach to achieving this goal. The following case studies examine nine programs representing different welfare-to-work strategies. Some programs target their resources toward low-skilled, hard-to-employ individuals, while others cater to low-income individuals seeking better jobs with a greater opportunities for economic self-sufficiency. Some of the featured programs serve only one neighborhood in a large city; others are comprehensive statewide programs for all welfare recipient families. Together they depict different promising approaches to welfare-to-work focusing on:

- Community jobs and innovative employer involvement;
- Comprehensive programs for the "hard-to-employ";
- Training in specialized fields with good employment prospects; and
- Support for post-secondary education.

Community Jobs and Innovative Employer Involvement

Washington State's Community Jobs Program

Geographic Area and Funding Sources:
The Community Jobs Program operates in 12 of Washington's 38 counties. It is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and funded through a combination of TANF and state funds.

Goals, Target Population, and Program Features:
The main goal of Community Jobs is to give TANF or State Family Assistance (SFA) participants who experience problems entering the regular job market valuable work experience with related training, mentoring and job preparation training leading to permanent employment. Participants must have been on public assistance at least one year or living in a county with high unemployment, unsuccessful in prior job search, and able to benefit from Community Jobs work experience. Community Jobs placements:

- must be temporary and must not replace permanent positions;
- ensure skill building for participants and opportunities for permanent employment ;
- offer supports such as childcare, transportation subsidizes, and required work clothing;
- provide job search and placement assistance with supporting supervision; and
- add real value to communities and their institutions.

Participants work at least an average of 20 hours per week and earn at least minimum wage. If workers' earnings after payroll taxes and work-related expenses do not equal or exceed the participant's cash assistance under TANF/SFA, they receive a supplemental grant from DSHS.

Numbers Served and Success of Program :
Job placements were scheduled to begin as of June 1, 1998. The program may have up to 540 participants in the 12 counties. The University of Washington will evaluate the program.

Highlights of the Program

- Enables participants to acquire hard and soft job skills and a significant work history.
- Increases income for participants through advanced EITC and with 20% work expense disregard.
- Services are contracted through non-profit or local government organizations to provide job opportunities in areas which fulfill community needs.

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Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project

Geographic Area and Funding Source :
Vermont's statewide reform of welfare was implemented in July, 1994. The state has retained its waiver to operate the program as designed, with minor modifications, though June 30, 2001.

Goal, Target Population, and Program Features:
The goal of Vermont's reform of welfare is to make dependence on cash assistance transitional by expanding the work requirement and offering subsidized employment when unsubsidized options are not available. Incentives to work are increased by providing a higher earned income disregard, extending transitional Medicaid, excluding the value of a vehicle, and allowing welfare families to save earnings. Individualized Family Development Plans (FDP) are developed by the participants and their case managers based on assessed strengths and barriers to employment. The FDP defines steps and tasks to remove barriers through education, training, and pre-employment activities. The program is strongly supportive of post-secondary education and employment-directed training that will lead to increased earnings.

If a recipient is unable to find unsubsidized employment, the parent enters Community Service Employment to work in a subsidized position in a public or non-profit organization. Workers in subsidized jobs have all or part of their cash assistance diverted into their paycheck with a $90/month disregard of earnings. They are paid minimum wage and are eligible for state and federal EITC. Although there is no lifetime limit for receipt of benefits, cash benefits are paid directly to vendors for basic living expenses if the non-exempt parent does not comply with the work requirement.

Numbers Served and Success of Program:
The number of Vermont households receiving cash assistance has decreased by 20% - from 26,402 in November 1993 to 22,192 four years later - attributable to continuing low unemployment rates and Vermont's new welfare policies. The percentage of welfare families with earnings increased from 20% to 28% during that period with average monthly earnings increasing from $373 to $474 and average monthly welfare payment decreasing from $189 to $177.

Highlights of the Program

- More recipient families have earnings and a combination of more generous earned income disregard and state and federal EITC has substantially increased income.
- Individuals who are unsuccessful in obtaining a job on their own are placed in subsidized employment and work with a case manager to address barriers to permanent employment.
- The work requirement can be modified to accommodate post-secondary education and employment-directed training as countable welfare-to-work activities.

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Comprehensive Programs for the "Hard-to-Employ"

New York State's Education for Gainful Employment (EDGE)

Geographic Area and Funding Sources:
Fifty-five counties in New York participate in this program. EDGE receives money from state education funds (40%) and federal welfare funds (60%), amounting to $32 million for the 1997-1998 fiscal year. Counties only receive funding for EDGE programs if employment targets are met. Individuals factored into the retained employment statistics must have worked for at least 90 days at a job placement cost of not more than $3,500.

Goals, Target Population, and Program Features:
This program uses a number of approaches to combine unpaid work experience assignments with work related basic education and English as a Second Language (ESL) services. It targets welfare recipients who lack a high school diploma or GED. Participants are trained in life skills, job readiness, and job development. Some EDGE programs link classroom instruction to specific job skills which will be used in individual workplaces. Examples of innovative programs provided by various EDGE sites include: matching participants with mentors who have graduated from the EDGE program; placing participants into internship positions in child care centers as part of their job skills training; and working with Health Care centers to train participants to receive a Medical Assistant/Billing Certificate.

Numbers Served and Success of Program:
The program served 30,000 people in 1995/1996. In that period, 8,000 participants were placed in employment. Based on a sample study of program participants, 79% of EDGE clients who were placed in jobs in 1993 were employed in 1996, with average hourly wages of $6.29.

Highlights of Program

- Preliminary evaluations show high job retention rate (79% of those placed in jobs in 1993 were still employed after 3 years.)
- EDGE is widespread: 55 counties throughout the state have initiated EDGE programs (30,000 individuals participated in one year); each county has implemented different innovative approaches for training and placing participants.
- EDGE provides extensive skills training and job coaching for people with low skill levels and education.

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Chicago Commons West Humboldt Park Employment Training Center (ETC)

Geographic Area and Funding Sources:
Chicago Commons ETC serves the Humboldt Park neighborhood in Chicago. It is funded through private foundations and state welfare and education agencies.

Goals, Target Population, and Program Features:
Chicago Commons West Humboldt Park Employment Training Center emphasizes attaining self-sufficiency through training and employment. The program targets low-income women who face multiple problems in overcoming poverty including long-term welfare receipt, domestic violence, children with special needs, substance abuse, learning disabilities, and low literacy and numeracy skills. Components of the program include:

- 80 hours of life skills training;
- ongoing, comprehensive case management and employment training counseling;
- individually tailored planning and targeted placement;
- education and training leading to specific technical training;
- GED preparation, basic education, and ESL; and
- on-site child care, health clinic and medical case management.

Chicago Commons ETC brings together private and public organizations to accomplish its goals. It also provides all services in one location in order to improve service accessibility. The program itself employs a diverse staff, including past Chicago Commons ETC graduates.

Numbers Served and Success of Program:
As of January 1, 1998, approximately one-third of participants who enrolled in the program during the 1995 and 1996 fiscal years were employed; 13% were enrolled in vocational training, and 18% were still participating in the program. These figures do not include the 10% of participants who are not on welfare. Two and a half years after entry into Chicago Commons ETC, 67% of participants are working or continuing with vocational training, college, or adult education.

Highlights of Program

- Targets truly hard to employ population.
- Emphasis on individual training and job placement according to skills and needs.
- Comprehensive education and training offerings and ongoing case management.
- One site for all services including child care and health care clinic.
- Diverse program staff including former Chicago Commons ETC participants

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Utah's Family Employment Program

Geographic Area and Funding Sources:
Utah extended its demonstration welfare reform program statewide in July, 1996. The state has retained its waiver to operate the program as designed, with minor modifications, under TANF.

Goals, Target Population, and Program Features:
Utah's goal for welfare reform is to increase employment and child support income to move families out of poverty. The basis for this goal is the belief that families can and will move toward self-reliance if provided with supports and assistance to solve the problems that cause them to seek financial assistance. Self-sufficiency planning begins immediately with diversion from ongoing financial support as an option. Diverted families with immediate employment prospects, or other sources of income, receive a one-time payment of up to three months of assistance. All non-diverted families develop Self-Sufficiency/Employment Plans with only temporary dispensation for illness, etc. Solving barriers to employment is accepted as a legitimate step toward independence, and is considered a component of work. Therefore, family counseling, parenting education, substance abuse treatment, health care, and other activities needed to enable a person to participate in employment or employment related activities are included. Employment is reinforced by disregarding the first $100 plus 50% of the remainder of earned income. Transitional case management, Medicaid and child care assistance are offered for 24 months.

Services to aid adults in moving off welfare include: case management, assessment, skill training, adult education, job development and placement, community work, funds for work-related expenses, job readiness and life skills training. For long-term recipients, key interventions include home visits, case staffing, intensive monitoring, and follow-up and readily accessible treatment counselors. If a parent fails to participate in the activities of the plan, a conciliation process takes place to determine if there are unaddressed barriers before imposing penalties.

Numbers Served and Success of Program
Utah had 8,500 cases involving children and their parent(s) in January, 1998, down from 12,000 two years prior. During that period average monthly earned income of working recipients increased from $434 to $522. In 1997 approximately 40% of reported case closures "left for work", while only 3.5% were closed for not meeting requirements after the conciliation process.

Highlights of the Program

- Families are supported in engaging in activities necessary to prepare them to enter employment.
- Flexible, individualized Self-Sufficiency Plans identify and make available the services to address barriers to work, and are re-evaluated if participation is not as expected.
- Program has a 36 month lifetime limit, but a family can receive up to 60 months assistance if the parent is employed 80 hours per month or more upon reaching the time limit and thereafter.

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The New Hope Project, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Geographic Area and Funding Sources:
Project New Hope serves residents of Milwaukee living in two zip code areas. Its $16 million resource base comes from a combination of public funding from state and federal governments and a consortium of local, state, and national private organizations and individuals.

Goals, Target Population, and Program Features:
Project New Hope bases eligibility on income and willingness to work full time (over 30 hours per week). Also, participants in the program must be over 18 years old and have a household income at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. New Hope pulls participants above the poverty line by helping them obtain Earned Income Credit (EIC), and providing additional wage supplements if EIC benefits and wages from a 30+ hour job are not enough to raise the family's income above the poverty line. New Hope also helps to subsidize costs of health insurance and child care according to level of income. The program offers a paid, community service job to any participant who cannot find permanent employment after an 8 week search, or who is temporarily unemployed. Project New Hope does not focus its efforts on skills training or transportation facilities, but refers participants to other agencies who provide these services. One of New Hope's purposes is to provide a research model to analyze the impact of the program. To do this, New Hope assigns half its applicant pool as a control group for the study, thus they do not receive the benefits provided under the program.

Numbers Served and Success of Program:
Based on a research sample of 678 participants, the 36 month demonstration project of New Hope, which began in July 1994, revealed the following outcomes: 51% of participants were working in full-time positions 12 months after the study; 72% used earnings supplements; 38% of the participants worked with New Hope to get insurance; 23% used child care through New Hope; 24% were involved in community service jobs through New Hope; and of those who obtained community service jobs, 44% are now in unsubsidized jobs.

Highlights of Program

- Project New Hope aims to insure that people who are willing and able to work full time should not be poor, and that work should make people financially better off than welfare.
- Participants of New Hope see at least a $.30 rise in total income for each $1 increase in earnings.
- New Hope serves low-income clients who sometimes get overlooked by the welfare system.
- A wide base of private and public funding makes the project financially feasible.
- An intensive research study of Project New Hope will provide in-depth analysis of the model to assess its potential for replication.

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Training in Specialized Fields with Good Employment Prospects

The Cooperative Health Care Network

Geographic Area and Funding Sources:
Cooperative Health Care Network recruits inner-city residents in the Bronx, NYC, Philadelphia and Boston. Para-professional Healthcare Institute raised start-up funding through grants and loans from alternative lenders, such as religious organizations. The Cooperative Health Care Network currently operates as a profitable enterprise.

Goals, Target Population, and Program Features:
Cooperative Health Care Network trains inner city women to be para-professional workers in the health industry. Workers are employed in health care cooperatives for elderly and disabled clients. While in the program, the women are trained to be hired as Medicare-certified "home health aides". All who complete the program are offered full benefits and the option to become employee owners. To become employee owners, the employees put a small down payment of $30-50 towards a share in the company, which immediately entitles them to dividend profits as well as voting rights. The company pays the remaining investment fee, which gets deducted over a three year period from monthly paychecks.

Numbers Served and Success of Program:
70-80% of the graduates are still employed after 6 months and over 50% are still employed in the program after three years. Wages are 10-20% higher than other home health care workers, and workers have the option to receive company dividends as an employee owner. Approximately 220 people in all three cities come through the program per year, with an average of 85% of these employees having been previously dependent on public assistance.

Highlights of Program

- Immediate placement after completion of training
- Active employer involvement as well as on-site counseling for each entering individual
- Participants are expected to maintain a high level of commitment and effort on the job to demonstrate their capabilities
- Employee ownership: after 6 months on the job, employees can buy a share of the company which entitles them to vote in elections of the board of directors and profit sharing.
- Once a participant finishes probation (typically 3 to 6 months), she is entitled to health care, vacation time and other benefits.

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Labor Force Access Development Initiative

Geographic Area and Funding Sources:
The program targets residents of Seattle and the Puget Sound region. An annual budget of approximately $200,000 comes from the state of Washington's welfare program, the Seattle JOBS initiative, and aerospace companies.

Goals, Target Population, and Program Features:
The Labor Force Access Development Initiative targets welfare recipients, low income people and dislocated workers to participate in a specialized training program to alleviate labor shortages in the aerospace industry while simultaneously improving work opportunities for the selected population. Shoreline Community College and the Washington Aerospace Alliance jointly administer this program in which they provide entry-level and advanced training for participants to become computerized numerical control machine operators. After 10 weeks of training, participants are hired or go on to an industry internship. For applicants who do not have math and English skills of 9th grade equivalence, the Initiative provides pre-course basic skills classes, offers tutoring opportunities, and assists with vocational English as a Second Language (ESL).

Numbers Served and Success of Program:
Approximately 400 people participate in this program each year. Nearly 50% of the participants are welfare recipients, with the remainder representing low income and dislocated workers. In one year, the Labor Force Access Development Initiative graduated 150 low income people and placed them into employment with average hourly wage of $11.67.

Highlights of Program

- Provides specialized skill training, which enables participants to access high paying jobs in the aerospace industry. The average hourly wage for program graduates is $11.67.
- Addresses a need in the aerospace industry by responding to a labor shortage with fully trained workers.
- Serves welfare recipients as well as low income or dislocated workers.
- Provides basic skills training in addition to specialized training to bring participants to needed levels of working capacity in order to successfully perform in this industry.

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North Seattle, WA 98133-5667
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Support for Post-Secondary Education

Maine's Parents As Scholars

Geographic Area and Funding Sources:
Up to 2000 individuals across the state of Maine may participate in Parents as Scholars. The program is directed towards the same population that would be eligible for TANF money, but is funded entirely by state instead of federal dollars. The state funding is counted towards the maintenance of effort requirement under the new federal welfare law.

Goals, Target Population, and Program Features:
The program serves TANF-eligible parents who wish to enroll in a two to four year secondary education program which will increase their chances of finding jobs that enable their families to be economically self-sufficient. Participants who have already received a bachelor's degree that can be used to access employment are not eligible. Also, applicants who have skills that qualify them for a job that pays at least 85% of Maine's median income are not eligible for this program. Participants receive financial aid which covers living expenses, medical assistance, and transitional support services. Participants must spend 20 hours per week in an educational or training program or other work activity during the first 24 months of the program and must participate in a minimum of 20 hours per week of work activity in addition to the educational program thereafter. The state-funded program provides equivalent to TANF cash benefits and services, but months of participation do not count toward the 60 month time limit for TANF benefits. The Division of Policy and Programs within the Bureau of Family Independence has worked with the Maine Association of Independent Neighborhoods and the Maine Equal Justice Project to implement the program.

Numbers Served and Success of Program:
The legislation to implement the Parents as Scholars program was approved in June, 1997. Currently, there are 900 families receiving Parents as Scholars funding.

Highlights of Program

- Up to 2000 participants are entitled to TANF equivalent benefits while simultaneously attending post secondary educational institutions.
- Participants are excused from federal restrictions, such as the 60 month time limit, while pursuing their education and are not required to engage in additional work activity for the first 24 months.
- This program addresses the need to include higher education as a means to securing employment opportunities which lead to long-term economic self-sufficiency.

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